

## Beliefs and Structures That Support and Sustain Partnership Work

Fullan, M. (1999). *Change Forces: The Sequel*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis, Inc.

Fullan, in his discussion of change for schools and educators, suggest eight critically important “lessons” of the change process:

- Lesson 1: Moral purpose is complex and problematic.
- Lesson 2: Theories of change and theories of education need each other.
- Lesson 3: Conflict and diversity are our friends.
- Lesson 4: Understand the meaning of operating on the edge of chaos.
- Lesson 5: Emotional intelligence is anxiety provoking and anxiety containing.
- Lesson 6: Partnership cultures are anxiety provoking and anxiety containing.
- Lesson 7: Attack incoherence: Connectedness and knowledge creation are critical.
- Lesson 8: There is no single solution: Craft your own theories and actions by being a critical consumer.

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Goodlad, J.I. (1994). *Educational Renewal: Better Teachers, Better Schools*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass Publishers.

Goodlad (1994) has identified several components necessary for partnerships to be successful. They must recognize and deal with the ways in which issues such as routine practices, leadership, organizational structures and rules, and fiscal issues (to name a few) are different. When attended to and critically examined, they serve as tools that help to negotiate the differences and as pathways to problem solving. Goodlad includes among them the following:

- *Lesson 1: Dealing with Cultural Clash.* School systems and universities are not cut from the same cultural cloth. The norms, roles, and expectations of educators in each of these educational realms could not be more different e.g., the regimen of time and space in the schools vs. the relative freedom of these precious commodities in the university setting; an ethic of inquiry in the university vs. an ethic of action and meeting immediate needs in the schools; a merit system with promotion and tenure in the university vs. an egalitarian work ethic in the schools. . . .
- *Lesson 2: Dealing with Schools of Education.* [Of the two sides of the partnership fence], the university side, usually the school (college or department) of education, is the more intractable.... The primary culprit is a misguided reward system that is an outgrowth of misplaced values, status deprivation, and identity crisis. . . .
- *Lesson 3: Sustaining Leadership and Commitment.* One of the more consistent and enduring findings in the research on complex organizations has to do with the importance of leadership at the top, and the ability to clearly, authentically, and consistently communicate mission, vision, a sense of what the organization can and must be about. This appears to be essential to maintaining school-university partnerships . . . .

- *Lesson 4: Providing Adequate Resources.* Much of leadership is symbolic. But symbols, ceremony, and celebration will not go far unless they are backed up by resources . . . .
- *Lesson 5: Modeling Authentic Collaboration.* An ethic of collaboration and collaborative inquiry and action, more than anything else, characterizes (or ought to characterize) the processes that go on in a school-university partnership. What it means to collaborate needs to be modeled every step of the way. Since building partnerships is mostly a two-steps-forward/one-step-backward kind of activity, inappropriate, unilateral decisions can destroy the process . . . .
- *Lesson 6: Living with Goal-Free Planning, Action, and Evaluation . . . .* Often, in fact, it is precisely as a result of activity that we become clearer about what we are doing and why we are doing it. Consequently, the world of human activity in and between educational organizations does not lend itself well to concrete, sequential models of planning and evaluation. The subtitle of this lesson is 'living with ambiguity,' . . . . Closure is a dirty word. Rarely is it ever achieved. In fact, if it is achieved, it is a good sign that either the issues are trivial or people are jumping to conclusions too quickly....
- *Lesson 7: Avoiding the Quick-Fix Syndrome.* The 'quick- fix' syndrome and its kissing cousin, the 'let's get something up on the scoreboard' syndrome, are extremely hazardous to the health of school- university partnerships, especially early in their formative stages.... There often is a perceived press to get something up on the scoreboard so that various publics believe something actually is going on . . . . Yet, if it is a serious partnership effort, a lot is going on: structures are being built, lines of communication are being established, working relationships and collaborative processes are being nurtured, and some activities are being explored by pockets of work groups here and there. Unfortunately, structures and processes do not happen overnight, and they cannot be hung on the evaluative hooks the public has grown accustomed to for education and schooling – standardized test score averages, for example.
- *Lesson 8: Winning the Process Substance Debate . . . .* The debate apparently revolves around this question: What work is of most value -- making things happen or the happening of things? The only way to win this debate is to render it a non-issue; it is, indeed, a false dichotomy. . . . There is great substance in process and great process in substance. Developing new ways for educators to communicate with one another and engage in work to solve problems of common concern is highly substantive. Developing and evaluating new programs (e.g., for the education of educators) demands much attention to process . . . .
- *Lesson 9: Avoiding Over- and Understructuring.* Organizing and governance structures are important for developing and sustaining school-university partnerships, but they take different forms depending upon local contexts. . . . watch out for both over- and understructuring; either may interfere with the work most important to partnership efforts. Ultimately, the crucial points of coordination are at the levels where real work is taking place, with the rest of the coordination and structure being in place to support that work.
- *Lesson 10: Translating Leadership as Empowerment and Shared Responsibility.* The partnership ethic must be enculturated at all individual levels and organizational levels. The power to lead cannot reside in just one or several charismatic figures. The more leadership is spread around, the better off the partnership will be.